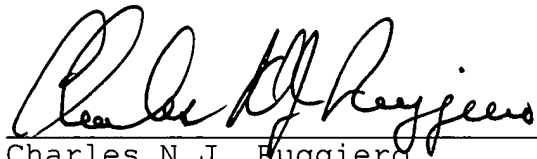


**REMARKS**

Claims 1 to 28 are pending in the present application.  
Favorable consideration is respectfully urged.

Respectfully submitted,

January 23, 2004

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Charles N.J. Ruggiero", is written over a horizontal line.

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